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Aldona,

Any plans for taping this week? Let me know.

-Greg

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PERRY DISCOURAGES EXPECTATIONS ON NATO MEMBERSHIP. US Defense Secretary William Perry yesterday told the press in Tallinn that he was advising Baltic leaders that NATO would not "prioritize" the candidacy of any country for membership in the alliance." admission to NATO membership for any country is many years away, and to me it is the wrong emphasis for Estonia or the other Central and East European countries to be focusing on NATO membership at this time. It is a long and complicated process. I can't forecast what the outcome of this process will be."

"OLD THINKING" ON SECURITY IN EUROPE. Russia's Federation Council has appealed to the parliaments of European and North American countries to help stop NATO's enlargement. "The move of NATO's military machine toward Russia's borders seriously threatens Russia's political, economic, and military security," the message said. Russia is refraining from "steps to strengthen its military security" in the hope that "common sense and the spirit of peace will prevail in Europe." The parliaments should promote "the relaxation of tensions," and not "pander to the ambitions of NATO's leadership."

The document's content was made public yesterday by Latvia's parliament, one of its recipients. The Federation Council, consisting mostly of appointees of President Boris Yeltsin, is the more moderate of the two houses of the Russian parliament. "Steps to strengthen Russia's military security" is a phrase meant, and understood, to imply formation of an alliance around Russia and countermeasures with regard to countries seeking accession to NATO.

PERRY IN THE BALTICS. US Defense Secretary William Perry is currently visiting Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia as the head of a 30-strong Defense Department delegation. Perry is conferring with the three countries' presidents and their foreign and defense ministers on US military assistance, both directly and in the framework of NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Multilateral projects under discussion include a joint Baltic airspace control system and the formation of the joint Baltic Battalion. Bilateral projects include US assistance in cleaning up former Soviet military bases, courses for Baltic officers in US military colleges, and agreements with each country on exchanging and protecting military information and on US expert assistance to the Baltic defense ministries and general staffs.

The visit appears to presage a greater US role in Baltic area security, on a track parallel to and potentially faster than NATO's hypothetical enlargement in the region. The host countries for their part have indicated that they are discussing with Perry the recent Russian threats of military countermeasures to NATO's possible enlargement. A last-minute addition to the agenda is Baltic concern over Moscow's demand to increase its force deployment in the Pskov and Leningrad regions, situated near the Baltic states, beyond the level stipulated in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe.